

Five Things

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Author: TheOceanBreathesSalty

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Summary: Jalex from Justin's POV. Please Review! For WyldCard4, even though I couldn't use her six words, I improvised. Hope you like it! I disclaim.

***Chapter 1*: Five Things**

"Means a lot to me, but not much to anyone else." -WyldCard4

(in J U S T I N's p o v)

You're overly sentimental.

It's one of your greatest weaknesses.

You have a box full of things that mean absolutely nothing to the rest of the world and everything to you.

There're various things in the box, all with a story, but there are five that really, really *mean* something.

A drawing.

A matching pair of broken sunglasses.

An old torn and ripped copy of Needful Things by Stephen King.

A plastic ring.

A letter.

All from Alex or associated with Alex.

There are other things in there that remind you of Max or Juliet or your parents, but there are only five things from Alex and they're the ones that matter the most.

(a D R A W I N G)

Alex defines herself as an artist now and she's great at it and you love all of her work. It's beautiful and meaningful and you're actually kind of jealous that she can express herself so clearly.

But as amazing as everything she does now is, your absolute favorite drawing is the first one that she ever made.

It's of you.

Of the two of you, actually.

You remember the day that she gave it to you.

She came home from kindergarten, ranting to your mom about some boy who almost got gum in her hair. She was acting kind of *strange*. Every time one of your parents would ask her what she did in school that day, she would avoid the question quite skillfully and you knew then and there that she was going to be quite the handful when the two of you got older.

Then it's ten o'clock at night and you're already asleep, you always went to bed when mom told you to, and a petite body sliding underneath your blankets next to you wakes you up.

"Jus'in?" A tiny voice lisped, the lack of two front teeth making her t's hard to pronounce.

"Alex?" you asked, opening your eyes and looking down at your baby sister. She was curled up next to you, one of her hands clenching a crumpled piece of paper. "What's that?" you asked as soon as you noticed it.

"Wha' I did in school." She mumbled, her too big eyes gleaming in the dark.

"Okay. Why didn't you show mommy or daddy?" The question seems logical to you. You always wanted to show off to your parents, wanted to brag and receive praise for anything and everything that you did. But Alex wasn't really like that.

"'Cause. I madeded it for you." She says, shoving it into your hand and burrowing into your side, so much smaller than you after your latest growth spurt.

"Alex," you murmured, uncertain what it was but reassured all the same. You had worried when Alex had started school, thinking

that she wasn't going to need you anymore or forget you or stop loving you or something. You gently open the paper, the crinkling from the unfolding the only sound in the room.

It was a crayon drawing of the two of you.

She had drawn a two-story house in the background, the door colored your favorite shade of green. There was a taller version of you standing in front of the house, clearly you by your shaggy dark hair and button up shirt. An older Alex stood next to you, long hair and bright clothes making her easily identifiable. The two of you were holding hands and at the bottom of the page there were large black letters spelling out **FOREVR**.

You smiled, sliding further down in your bed so that you could meet her eyes.

"Thank you," you whispered, the words inadequate for the warm feeling the picture gave you.

So you pressed your chapped lips against her small, perfect ones in a quick, chaste kiss, saying thank you in a way that felt right, instinctual.

It wasn't until you were older that you realized losing your first kiss to your little sister while the two of you hid underneath thick blankets in your room and dreamt of forever wasn't normal.

But you still loved the drawing.

It reminded you of your first kiss, perfect but unmentionable because it was with *Alex*, and it was a promise of forever with the girl that you loved too much.

It was proof that she loved you back.

(two pairs of **broken sunglasses**)

The pairs were identical, except for the color of the frames.

There was one pair of green that were Alex's and a pair of purple that were yours. They were those old-school Ray Bans that *everyone* owned. Your father had gotten them when you were all on a family trip to Coney Island.

At that point Max was eleven years old and he had just gotten some of his powers and he was *so* out of control, mom chased after him for the entire day and you and Alex hung with your dad. He felt bad for the two of you, Alex was too short to ride the scariest roller coaster and you had eaten a questionable corndog that was twisting your stomach, so he saw the sunglasses and bought them and handed them to you and Alex, smiling so brightly you thought his face was going to split.

He snapped a picture of the two of you, still so happy because he thought that he had fixed all of your problems. You and Alex had been wanting a pair of those sunglasses for weeks now, ever since your friends began showing up to school with them.

So the two of you smiled just as brightly as your dad, grinning into the camera with your arms wrapped around each other and a Ferris wheel in the background.

The two of you wore those sunglasses *everywhere* for the next few months until one day at school, some boy began to pick on you.

"Hey Russo! Why are you wearing those gay sunglasses? Trying to look as girly as your sister?" He jeered, ripping the sunglasses off your face and snapping one of the sides. "Oops," he laughed, dropping both pieces on the ground and preparing to step on them.

However, before his foot reached the ground, a hurricane of Alex was jamming her foot into his crotch, her face murderous and her hands clenched into fists.

"Laughing now?" she snarled, shoving her other foot into his stomach and glaring down at him as he moaned in pain on the ground.

You calmly stepped around her, picked up the pieces of your favorite sunglasses, and walked out of school.

Alex stayed behind and you strode out the doors to the sound of her threats and the boy's whimpered apologies.

You knew that she wouldn't find you for a while, that she would understand that you wanted sometime. So you got home late to find that Alex had told your parents you were working on a project and that you weren't in any trouble at all.

You smiled at your mom and nodded to your dad, going up the stairs and entering your room, lying down on the bed and trying to forget the scalding burn of humiliation.

"Hey," Alex whispered as she snuck into your room at midnight. "I'm sorry. That jerk didn't know what he was talking about. He won't be bothering you again though." And you believed her because there was sharp promise in her voice, some undertone that threatened revenge for him and pledged salvation for you.

"It's fine." You didn't really have much else to say. You didn't want to admit to your little sister that this whole day had sucked and you felt like crap and you wished that you had gotten a shot at the jerk before she had.

"You don't sound fine." Was all she said before walking from the room, setting down something on the foot of your bed before leaving.

You sat up and looked down, your lips unwillingly curling at the sight of her purple sunglasses, one side broken off.

There was a note too, written in the air using magic so unfortunately you couldn't save it in your box with all the other things.

But you still remembered what it said.

Figured we should match. Don't worry about not getting to hit him, I did it enough for both of us and you aren't the kind of guy who gets in trouble anyways. And speaking of trouble, I've got detention for the next week. Make excuses to mom and dad for me? Thanks. You're the best.

That was it. And it was just so wonderfully Alex that it made you feel better and the next day when the boy, or the jerk as Alex named him, saw you in the hall and ran the opposite direction, you smiled and thought of a good lie to tell your parents for why Alex needed to stay late after school.

You would cover for her.

Just that once.

(an *old torn and ripped* copy of N-E-E-D-F-U-L T-H-I-N-G-S by Stephen King)

Alex was an absolute *pain* when she was sick.

She was mean and bitchy and yelled a lot. She refused to take medicine and wouldn't eat what your mom told her to and she just glared all the time.

It was bad when she was young, but it's just as bad now with both of you well into your twenties.

It's annoying and frightening and weirdly endearing and whenever Alex so much as comes down with the sniffles, the rest of your family begins to avoid her as if she has the plague.

It's also the cause of another favorite memory.

When Alex was ten, she got the chicken pox. You had already had it, as had your father, but Max and your mom hadn't so they had left to go stay with your grandma until Alex was better.

Your dad was working down in the substation and you were supposed to be watching Alex, but she kept itching and she wouldn't stop and you didn't know what to do.

So finally, you sat her down on the couch and started reading Needful Things aloud to her. And, yes, it's not necessarily the best plan to read Stephen King to a ten year old, but you figured it was okay because not only would it actually interest her but you knew for a fact she had been sneaking down to watch R rated horror flicks since she was eight.

She laid on the couch and listened intently to your voice as you read and read and read. Your voice was getting horse and you were pretty far into the book when Alex finally nodded off.

She woke up and you read to her again, then she would fall asleep, then wake up and eat as you read. Things continued that way until you finished the book.

"Again," a sleepy voice muttered from underneath a large pile of blankets. "Please?"

So you read it again. And then every time after that when she was sick.

You were the only person that she didn't growl at or scare away when she was unwell. She would just smile lightly at you when you walked in, her eyes automatically searching out the increasingly tattered book.

To some people, this seems kind of strange.

'Why would you want to be around a sick Alex?' Max always asks, more than slightly afraid of the ill version of his sister.

'Why don't you read a different book?' Your frustrated mother asks, having attempted to read to Alex also but getting very different results.

'Why don't you get another copy? That thing looks like it's about to fall apart.' Your father always says, not understanding that the book had meaning that you wouldn't give away for any reason.

The book was a symbol.

It said that Alex let you in when she refused to let everyone else in.

It said that you knew Alex better than anyone else in the world, because someone else wouldn't have picked the right book or would have switched to a different book after only reading through it once.

It was something that you and Alex shared, that was just yours and hers.

(a p l a s t i c r i n g)

The ring was fake silver, the paint chipped away from age, and had a large, fake, and red stone in the middle of it.

It was your favorite piece of jewelry.

It was cheap and kind of hideous and anyone else would have thrown it out long ago.

It was your "engagement" ring.

And most importantly?

It was from Alex.

You had gotten it when you were nine years old, from an arcade down the street from the substation. You, and by extension, Alex, were allowed to go five shops down and five shops up from the substation on Waverly Street as long as you were safe and your parents knew where you were.

Really, it was only supposed to be you who was allowed to go, but Alex and all the indignation her small body could hold and quickly disabused your parents of the notion that they could give things to you and not her.

So the rule was amended and Alex could come as long as you stayed with her.

You were so mad when you found out.

Yeah, so you loved Alex, but this was supposed to be *your* thing. It was supposed to be one of those bonuses that you got for being the eldest child, to make up for the responsibility that came along with it.

But Alex got it too.

So it wasn't yours and it wasn't special and you were only nine, so of course you were going to be immature about it and throw a small tantrum.

So you left the substation in a huff, Alex trailing along behind you, and went straight to the arcade. You nodded to the guy at the counter and went to the pinball machine, trying to break your high score and ignoring Alex's existence.

Three hours later and it was almost dark outside and you had to go home. You looked around for Alex, suddenly feeling guilty for shutting her out all day.

"Alex?" you called out, beginning to panic when you couldn't see her. "Where are you? Alex!"

"Here," a quiet whisper said from your side, and all of a sudden you're faced down with sad brown eyes and a puppy dog pout.

"Where were you? You're supposed to stay with me!" And alright, you're being more than a little irrational and probably hypocritical but you were angry and then you were worried and you aren't really all that great at dealing with your emotions.

"I thought you didn't wanna hang out with me." Her voice is still quiet and hurt, but it has some matter-of-fact quality to it that goes straight to your already guilt churned stomach.

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. But this was supposed to be *mine*." You fruitlessly try to explain, finally realizing how silly it was to hurt your sister over something as stupid as this.

"It's okay," she said, her voice slightly louder and her eyes less sad, "I got something for you!" she sounds almost excited by the end of her sentence and you smile at her, closing your eyes and holding out your hand before she can even ask.

Something drops into your palm, and there's the cool feel of plastic against your skin. You open your eyes curiously and see a ring, bright silver paint and a red stone that's the same shade of Alex's favorite color.

"Pretty," you whisper without even meaning to, the word just slipping from your lips. "What's it for?"

"Because it'll make you happy." She sounds certain, and you smile at her innocence and surety.

"Okay. Why don't we make it mean more?" You ask, the words once again coming out without permission from your brain.

"How?" She asks, her eyes now bright with curiosity and her lips curved upwards into a smile.

You don't answer, you just slip the ring onto your left ring finger. It's way too big but you don't care.

You get to the machine and play it a couple times, quickly getting another ring. You pull it out and notice it's gold with a stone your favorite tint of green. You slip it onto her left ring finger and smile at her.

"So now we're married? Like mom and daddy?" She asks you, lifting her eyes momentarily from the also too big ring on her finger.

"Well, we're only engaged, but that's okay. We can get married later! Then we'll be together forever." You say, your mind clouding over with dreams of a future and a wife you're well aware you shouldn't want.

"Okay! We'll get a pretty house with a room for Maxie right? And maybe a kitty. Or some fish. Not both though, they might eat each other!" And you walk her home, listening to her ramble on about how she saw it on a cartoon so it must be true and smiling at the light weight of the ring on your hand.

It's one of the best memories you have.

You have an odd thought and reach into the box to pull out the ring, you look down at faded silver, and slide it on to your left ring finger.

It's a perfect fit.

(a *letter*)

You couldn't say that this was your favorite of all the Alex objects in your box, because they were all really important and they were all really meaningful.

So you really couldn't pick a favorite.

But.

This letter was without a doubt your favorite.

That is, if you could pick one.

Justin.

I don't really know why I'm writing this or what to say or what the point of this whole writing you a letter thing is. But I'm not really good with words, not when it comes to you. Every time I try to tell you something it comes out wrong or you misunderstand, that's the way that it's been since I started kindergarten at least. So I'm writing a letter because I have something important to say and I think if I actually try to say it, it won't work out the way I want it to. Maybe it won't even work out the way

that I want it to if I write it.

But you're worth the risk.

You went off to college this year, you should actually still be there now if I mail this correctly, but seeing as how I'm using an unfamiliar spell and you aren't here to teach me to do it right, I'm not so sure this letter will reach you.

I hope it does.

Because I've got something important to say.

And I know, I know, you're probably thinking 'if what you have to say is oh-so-important then why won't you just say it?' but I can't say it.

Not just yet.

Do you remember when we were kids and I gave you that drawing? I was so proud of it. But then my teacher asked if that was the boy that I someday wanted to marry, the one that I was holding hands with, the one that was meant to be you.

And the answer was yes.

An immediate yes, one that I didn't have to think about or ponder or consider.

So I told her that.

And she said that she thought my older brother Justin would probably try and scare him off.

I just nodded as it hit me all of a sudden, that regular little girls drew pictures of futures with Prince Charming, not with their older brother. So I didn't want to show mom and dad. I know you wondered about that, why I refused to show anyone but you the picture.

But I knew even then that I wanted you forever and I didn't want to hear anyone else tell me that it was wrong.

I gave you that drawing and you kissed me, barely, but still it was a definite kiss. I don't tell anyone about it, but I've always considered that my first kiss. It was the one that mattered the most, the one that still matters the most, so why shouldn't I have claimed it as my first kiss? Even if it's only in my own thoughts.

Is the point of this letter getting any clearer? Or am I rambling so much about my favorite memories that you're still just confused and not getting the point?

Well, I'll just keep going. Just in case you still aren't getting it.

Do you remember those sunglasses that we got? The ones that dad gave us at Coney Island during Max's more-crazy-than-usual phase?

I was so mad when that boy broke your pair. I loved that we had them, something similar, something that matched. We were so different and we fought so much that sometimes I got afraid and thought you didn't really love me. For some reason the glasses helped with that. It was something we both loved, something that we shared.

And he broke them.

So I hit him and got detention and refused to apologize. And I broke my own sunglasses, because that way we still shared something. Although now what we shared was hatred of a boy and broken sunglasses as opposed to a shared love of unbroken sunglasses, but I figured it was better than nothing.

I still have the picture of the two of us at Coney Island, it's hanging in my closet with all my other favorite pictures. Your smiling and your arms around my waist and mine are around your neck and we're wearing those matching sunglasses and I think it might be my favorite picture ever.

Are you beginning to understand what I'm trying to say? I hope so. You're supposed to be the smart one.

You know, the other day, I missed you and I was feeling kind of sick to my stomach so I tried to read Needful Things but it just wasn't the same.

The copy was new and in perfect condition because you took the good copy and to be honest, I missed your voice. Trying to

imagine the way that you said things while reading it myself just wasn't the same.

I threw the book against the wall and Max looked at me like I was crazy and Mom yelled at me for a good few minutes, but I was frustrated and didn't know what else to do.

That damn book.

It makes me feel better when you're here, when you read it to me.

But you aren't here.

And all it did was make me miss you.

God, I hope you understand all this.

I never did tell you did I? I still have that ring that you gave me. The gold's all faded and chipped and the green stone is slightly melted for some odd reason, but I still have it.

I was thinking about that the other day, how you promised me forever. I really hope that you're going to live up that promise.

I was moving around stuff and all of a sudden there's this ring. And I'm remembering that night, how I was so sad that I made you angry because really I just wanted to spend more time with you. I thought that you didn't want to spend time with me and that was why you were so annoyed. But then you smiled when I gave you that cheap, plastic ring. You smiled like it was real and worth a lot of money, like it meant something.

I loved that smile.

Then you gave me one back, and I asked if we were married. I was young and I didn't understand much but I knew that marriage was kisses whenever and living in the same house and staying together forever.

And I wanted that with you.

I still want that with you.

I found the ring and it reminded me of all these things, all these moments in time. The moments that I want for forever.

You know, I tried on the ring?

It fits perfect.

And I think that means something, at least I'm hoping that it does.

I'm not trying to royally screw anything up or scare you or anything.

But I have to say it.

I want you.

I want you now and I want your forever.

I want you to do married people things to me and kiss me all the time and tell me that you love me.

I want a two-story house with an orange room for Max and a big kitchen where I'll finally learn to cook and a living room where we can cuddle up to watch movies.

I want to buy two pairs of matching sunglasses, bright emerald green for me and deep crimson red for you, and I want to wear them with you on a date to Coney Island where we take another picture in front of the Ferris wheel with our arms wrapped around each other.

I want you to read to me when I'm sick, even though I'm pretty sure both of us have half the book memorized by now.

I want a real ring with a diamond stone.

And I just had to tell you this all-important thing.

I love you.

Alex.

You love that letter.

You've read it so many times, you could probably recite it by heart.

As soon as you read it the first time, you were gone, transporting yourself to Alex and staring at her where she sat in your room.

There was a plastic ring on her left hand and a surprisingly detailed drawing of the two of you standing in front of a two-story house on your desk.

"Alex," you whispered, so overwhelmed and yet not shocked at all.

This was *always* coming, in fact you think that some part of you had been waiting for it.

"Justin," she said back, speaking softly like you.

Her gaze falls to the letter in your hands and you move closer to her, dropping the letter next to the drawing on your desk in order to yank her up off the chair and into your arms.

You press your lips to hers and she twines her fingers through your hair and everything is *perfect*.

You pull back just enough to speak, still close enough that when you say the words your lips brush against hers.

"I love you too."

And that was that.

Three years later and Max has won the wizarding competition and made the two of you legally unrelated and you had given Alex that real ring, a gold band with an emerald stone and two diamonds on either side of the emerald.

You lived in a two-story house and Alex was a highly sought after fashion designer and you taught at the local college.

There were four pictures in your bedroom, a crayon drawing and the updated version of the same picture done in pencil. There was also a picture of two teens wearing Ray Bans in front of the Ferris wheel at Coney Island, hanging next to almost the same picture except for the two of you were about a decade older and wearing aviators, Alex's black with silver and your's black with gold.

There were two plastic rings sitting on your dresser and a faded letter on the corner of your desk, sitting next to a falling apart copy of Needful Things.

There was a completely orange room on the first floor that Max stayed in for random periods of time and there was a well-used kitchen and a comfortable couch for watching movies in your living room.

Everything was perfect and wonderful and kind of cliché and the odds were so totally against this but you had wanted to marry Alex since she was five and you had your first kiss.

You had wanted her for forever.

And now you had her for forever.

And you had all of your favorite memories resting on your dresser and sitting on your desk and hung up on your wall to prove it.

So, yeah, maybe you were overly sentimental and you had random pieces of junk strewn about your home that other people didn't see any value in at all.

But you saw value in them.

They were your favorite memories with Alex and some of her favorite memories too.

They were proof that you had dreamed of forever and that she had dreamed of it with you.

They were love and hope and *everything*.